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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 190845

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/22/2031  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [IT](#)  
SUBJECT: REPEAT: ITALY'S DEMARTINO ON DHIQAR UNIT FOR  
RECONSTRUCTION SUPPORT

REF: STATE 168109

Classified By: NEA DAS L. VICTOR HURTADO, ACTING, FOR  
REASONS 1. 4 (a), (b) AND (d)

¶1. (U) This message repeats STATE 168109 from early October, which may have had transmission problems. This message contains an action request. See para. 11.

¶2. (C) SUMMARY: On Sept. 22, Amb. Gianludovico De Martino, head of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Task Force on Iraq (and former Italian Ambassador to Baghdad), provided Deputy Senior Coordinator for Iraq Barbara Stephenson with an update on Italy's efforts in Dhi Qar province and sparked a wide-ranging discussion on ways to improve local governance in Iraq. The stand-up of Italy's all-civilian Reconstruction Support Unit (Italy's preferred appellation for its Provincial Reconstruction Team, also abbreviated as USR) is proceeding apace: most elements of the USR have been relocated to Talil Air Base's Camp Adder including a U.S. civilian contingent under Italian lead situated also in Camp Adder. Amb. De Martino asked such questions as how best to transport USR civilians to and from Iraq's Talil Air Base once Italian military assets depart this year, how best to coordinate the activities of Iraq's new National Reconstruction Committee with the National Coordination Team (NCT). He also proposed creative ways to improve the effectiveness of Italy's USR, such as by meeting Iraqis at a local Iraqi military base instead of a U.S. one, and embedding UN staff in the USR. END SUMMARY

TRANSITION, OVERWATCH AND QUICK REACTION FORCE (QRF)  
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¶3. (C) Amb. De Martino, accompanied by an Italian Embassy staffer, met with Barbara Stephenson and representatives from NEA, EUR, DS, Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Stephenson congratulated De Martino

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on the Sept. 21 transition of Dhi Qar province to Provincial Iraqi Control and thanked him for keeping Italian troops on duty for Overwatch of the province, including QRF functions, through the first of November. De Martino was not quite sure whether Italy would end its Overwatch duties in October or November, but would try to find out. Stephenson emphasized the month of October is a critical period of the transition and that Romania and Australia would not quite be positioned to conduct

Overwatch should Italy end its duties before November.

#### LOGISTIC STATUS OF USR

¶4. (SBU) De Martino said the relocation of the USR from Camp Mittica to Talil Air Base's Camp Adder was almost complete, noting that it should be at turn-key status within 30 days or so. De Martino indicated Italy intends to hire more local Iraqis. Italy plans to hire Aegis security to bring Iraqis to the USR, but intends to limit its own movement outside Talil. Asked whether limiting movement outside the base reduces Italy's effectiveness, De Martino said that the Italian civilians are building on established relationships with Iraqis, who are by now accustomed to visiting the Italian PRT. De Martino further explained that part of Italy's strategy to facilitate a low-profile engagement with Iraqis might include maintaining a small cell within Camp Mittica after it is transferred to the Iraqi Army. This would provide a different optic and feel than having Iraqis enter a Coalition military base, and it would be less intrusive than having Italians riding in armed convoys to Iraqi government centers. What is more, as the goal of PRT's/USR's is local capacity building, and the Dhi Qar PRT/USR is slated to end operations next September, De Martino noted that the designated PRT/USR space inside Camp Mittica would provide the seed of the Iraqi-run operation that would inherit the training and capacity building programs currently run by Italian and American PRT members. The PRT/USR space inside Camp Mittica could serve as offices for locally engaged Iraqis, training space for ongoing programs, and as a place for USR/PRT members to meet with Iraqi officials.

¶5. (C) De Martino flagged a potential transportation problem: how to transport USR personnel into and out of Iraq after Italy's military leaves. He asked for assistance on how to coordinate passage. NCT's coordination role in the transport of PRT personnel was an open question.

¶6. (SBU) On personnel, De Martino noted the USR has half a dozen Italians, with a new team leader (Anna Prouse) almost confirmed. A rule of law coordinator would be going to the Basra PRT in January and he had sounded out Australia on contributing staff to the USR (AU did not say no). De Martino reiterated Italy's offer to field advisers to Ministry Assistance Teams in Baghdad, specifically for MOD, MOI, and perhaps for the Ministry of Finance.

#### USR PROGRAMS

¶7. (SBU) De Martino outlined some of the USR's current efforts, sometimes speaking from an English-language document entitled "Italy's Reconstruction in Iraq 2003-2006". Since 2004 Italy has been running a project for e-government in Nasiriyah, and will try to expand this project to other parts of Dhi Qar province. One part of this effort involves training Iraqis in Italy on how to build an electronic civil registry. In the health sector, Italy is supplying equipment and ambulances to Iraqi facilities. Italy has also held seminars in Italy on mixed cities and constitutional reform.

¶8. (SBU) De Martino noted that UN programs Italy was funding through the UN Development Program (UNDP) in Dhi Qar were not proceeding due to the absence of UN staff. He said Italy is considering asking UN personnel to serve in the USR in order to implement the Italian-funded programs, and that, if successful, perhaps other organizations such as the EU might eventually take part as well.

¶9. (SBU) In a meeting with Iraqis in early September, Amb. DeMartino said the central government has recently

allocated \$50 million to spend by the end of calendar year 2006 each in Dhi Qar, Basra, and Maysan. De Martino reported a serious lack of coordination among Iraqis at the national and local level to spend these monies.

#### NATO GENDARME MANDATE

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¶10. (SBU) De Martino reiterated Italy's position that it will provide police training through NATO if its mandate is changed to permit such training, and would not do so on strictly a bilateral basis. He noted that Italy has not bilaterally pressed the French on this issue since our last meeting in early August. The NATO desk noted that USG is trying to get Iraq to send another letter to the NATO Secretary-General reiterating its request for training, and suggested that the Government of Italy might issue a letter to the NATO SYG stating its offer for training.

#### ACTION REQUEST

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¶11. (C) Request that post consider responses to provide Italy, either in the field or in capitals, on the following questions:

a) What mechanism should be used to coordinate the transport of USR staff into and out of Iraq in the absence of Italian military assets? Is there a role for NCT? Specifically, with the withdrawal of Italian troops, will the existing Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreements between the US and Italy still apply to Italian civilians serving in the USR?

b) Assess the feasibility of De Martino's proposal to establish a meeting location inside Camp Mithica after it passes to the Iraqi Army. Could a similar solution work for other PRTs and possibly offer us a way both to reduce security costs and minimize the risk to our personnel and to begin to prepare for the transition from PRTs in 2008?

c) Assess the feasibility of embedding UN personnel in Italy's USR and possibly other PRTs.

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